

Norwegian Lutheran Aid still active after 77 years

By SIGRID GILMER
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The Norwegian Lutheran Aid was organized in 1900 with seven charter members: Mrs. Maline Karlsen was president; Mrs. Lina Reinseth vice president; Mrs. Ingeborg Husby, secretary; and Mrs. Lisa Haugen, treasurer, others were Mrs. Ingeborg Reinseth; Mrs. Sigred Husby and Mrs. Ricka Ostenson.

There was no church in the community and the first church services were held semimonthly in different homes. The first minister was the Rev. Rogen.

This was in the days before regular transportation, and the minister walked from Vancouver to be on hand for services.

The aid meetings were an all-day affair. Members and their families came in the morning, brought their big dinners and stayed all day. Then later in the afternoon another lunch was served.

Members walked from Prune Hill to Oak Park — a distance of three or four miles — carrying their babies, and with watchful eyes on the older tots.

There was no bridge across the Washougal River and in the summer time they waded across the river or crossed in a row boat. After the railroad bridge was built, about 1906, they would get permission to cross the railroad trestle, managing to cross before a train would come.

The urge to build a church was strong. It was built in

1907, with Ole Reinseth donating land between Washougal and Camas.

The pastor's salary and bills were met by the Ladies Aid selling farm products, baked foods, and sewing quilts and other items. Some men donated money.

In 1923, the Ladies Aid joined the Women's Missionary Federation of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America and the first delegate was sent to Parkland, Wash. Her expenses were \$2.

In 1926, the church disbanded and the building was torn down in 1930. The furnishings were distributed. The land was given back to Mr. Reinseth. The bell was given to Zion Lutheran Church, and is now located on the east side of the church. The organ and benches were given to the old people's home in Eugene. However, the communion service was

stolen from the church.

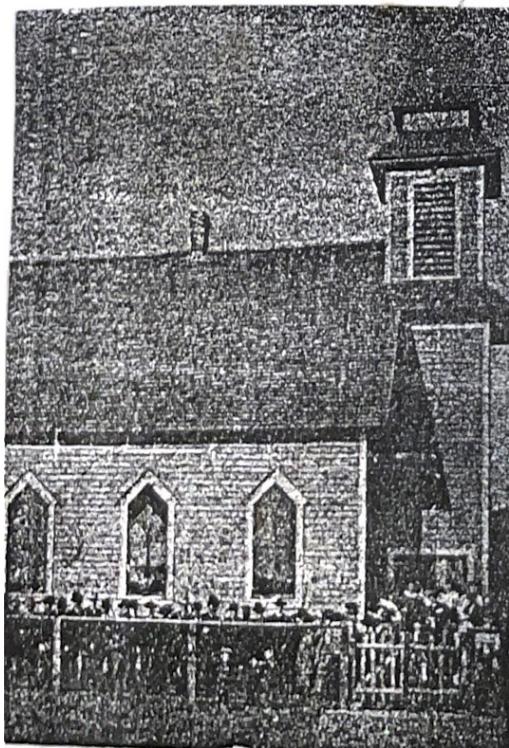
There was no church to work for, but members decided to continue with their Aid Society.

Donations were sent to Josephine Old People's Home, later changed to Josephine Sunset Home at Stanwood, and to the children's home in Parkland, later changed to Luther Child Center in Everett, a home for mistreated boys.

Donations are still sent to these institutions three times a year and memorials are given to churches of various members.

At the present time, the aid is not affiliated with any church. There are 18 members who meet in the homes. Meetings are always opened with devotions and prayer.

Present officers are Jo Hansen, president; Ione Ross, vice president; Idella Ritter, secretary; and Alice Gregg, treasurer.



NORWEGIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH, built in 1907 in Oak Park near the Port Dock, was disbanded and torn down in 1930. The above picture was taken on a Confirmation Day. Pastor was the Rev. Rogen. Ida Husby, Orris Wall and Ernest Wall were the confirmands. Others pictured are Mr. and Mrs. Ole Reinseth and son Edward; (Reinseth was timber cruiser for Crown Columbia); Bill Weir; Mr. and Mrs. John Haugen; Mr. and Mrs. John Ostenson and children, Gus, John and Heinie; Mr. and Mrs. Ernie Ostenson and Clarence; Mr. Louis Vogen; Martin Anderson, who built the church; Mr. and Mrs. John Husby and daughter; Mrs. Al Romine and sons; Ingwald Husby and Henry. —Photo courtesy of Sigrid Gilmer.